

Rosary: A Resting Meditation

“Happy Birthday!” Our priest smiled and handed me a small blue box. “Just a little something to protect you on your travels.”

I opened the little box and pulled out a rosary. The rose-colored wooden beads drew me in, in a way I had rarely felt before. I was mesmerized by the rosary. It seemed that all that mattered in the whole world was that little string of beads. The beads were soft and fragrant, possibly made of rosewood. The metal cross shone with a tint of turquoise. It felt natural, simple, balanced. It made my hand tingle, my heart soften. I couldn’t take my eyes off it. I’d had rosaries before. I carried my grandmother’s whenever I traveled. But never had a rosary made me feel this way. I looked inside the little box and saw a tiny label: Jerusalem. Could it be that it was the Holy Land I felt in this string of beads?



I felt it calling me in the most intimate of ways. It lured and sang. I wanted to hold it, and when I did, I felt the most amazing peace wash over me. It had nothing to do with the prayers it could carry. There was something in the very fabric of this little thing that radiated magic. I kept it close in sight on my bedroom dresser like a beacon of light, should I need one. One night I woke up in distress. I was exhausted, stressed, and emotionally washed out. I had not slept a full night all week. I sat in my armchair, my eyes burning from the lack of sleep. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw my little rosewood rosary, lying there simply, without pretense. I recalled the drone of the nuns mumbling their rosaries in the school chapel. They looked like they were thinking about a million other things, like what they would have for supper or what the weather was like outside, rather than truly praying. I remember thinking that it was pointless to pray this way. I had always made a point to concentrate on every word of the prayer: “Hail Mary, full of grace . . .”

Now, in the depth of the night, I had no energy and no will to give power to these words. And yet, I needed that presence. I needed my Lady with me in the darkness. The prayer to my Goddess, the Hail Mary, started feebly in my throat and rose in a soft whisper. As the familiar words tumbled out, I felt them embrace me, weaving a protective circle around me. I put no conscious effort or reverence into the words. I just moved my lips around them. There was nothing more I could do.

Soon, the string of words became alive with its own rhythm. I repeated the words over and over again. The mantra rose and fell with my every breath like a soothing wave. It rocked me and hugged me. My breath became a prayer, steady and rhythmic. Magic was spinning around me and flowing through me. My distressed mind started to settle, and the wave took me over. The energy flowed through me without effort, gentle and soothing, and lulled me into a quiet trance, a place of peace.

I realized with amazement that I wasn’t praying; I was being prayed. My body pulsed with a new life. Every ten Hail Marys, an Our Father would strengthen me. I was finally resting. How amazing, I thought, that both my Mother and Father were being honored on this string of beads. And what wonderful magic they had spun for me this night.





Ode to the Moon: Reconnecting to the Sacred Feminine

One of the reasons I walked away from traditional Christianity was to find the great Goddess. Like my God, she is a woman of many faces. She is Athena, the warrior maiden; Ceridwen, the conjurer of magic; Isis, the guardian of life; and the Morrigan, destroyer and warlord. She is the warrior women of the Torah, the Matriarchs, the blessed Virgin, and the Mystic. She is the bounty of the earth, the giver and the sustainer of life. She is all around us. How could I cast her aside? She is everywhere. Once I had gotten to know her, I realized the greatest reason why I could never forsake her: She was a part of me. She lived in me.

The moon is the orb of the Goddess. It is the orb of reflection, introspection, and intuition. It lights the phantoms in the darkness and makes us face what lurks beneath. As a Christian, I had always striven for perfection of character, striving for compassion and mildness, suppressing the outbursts, the passions, the rage that sometimes arose for no reason. As I got to know the Goddess, I started to understand where it all came from, this rage and sudden madness. This was the dark moon, the destroyer, the banisher. This was the seat of outrage at injustice, the power that protects with the fire of desperation. It was a part of me, and it was powerful and it was good. I embraced it like a gift.

What it means to be a woman, that deep complexity, has been completely obliterated from Christianity. But women of passion, of uncompromising fierceness, have been the stronghold of the Christian faith since the very beginning. So when I raise my hands and praise the Great Goddess, I awaken the memories of all these women who have been tamed under the male church. I raise every symbol of sacred femininity that has been given to us, from the Venus of Willendorf to the Virgin Mary to the goddesses of antiquity and of the Far East. They are women and they are divine, and we desperately need to bring them back to life. When the moon calls, whether in its full or dark phase, I

sit in its light. I let its crystal light fall on me like a fresh shower of star dust. With a soft breath, I inhale it and blow it gently in a circle all around me. This circle is me and the moon, a place to be Woman.

There, in the darkness, a figure forms. She is the Maiden. She is the Vestal Virgin in a long white robe, tending her temple, speaking prophecy with the voice of intuition. She is the child Mary, weaving the temple veil in complete devotion. She is Athena, Esther, the Amazon, tall and proud and fierce. She stands defiant, shoulders back, weapons in hand. She is young, vibrant, purpose-driven. She will kill for what she believes and destroy what threatens those she loves. Her face may change, her guise may change, and her weapons will vary, but she is one. She is strength, youth, innocence, and power.

The circle keeps turning and the Goddess becomes fuller. She answers the call of nature and becomes pregnant with life. This life twirls inside her, makes her grow, makes her vulnerable—beautiful and heavy with a burden she will not shed. With this growth, she becomes the giver, the sustainer. She is complete humility and complete glory, fragile and all-powerful. She gives life. There is nothing greater. The fiercest warriors tremble at such power. She is Mary in full acceptance of her mission. She is Isis full with her son Horus. She is Ceridwen and Demeter, bringer of life on Earth. She is every mother who has ever breathed life into another so that we may pursue our journey on Earth.

The circle continues. Spring turns to summer and then to fall. The Goddess changes yet again. Her shoulders slope down slightly, her hair lightens, and the lines of the ages show on her face. In her eyes is the glimmer of knowledge, wisdom of what she has seen, lessons she has lived. Her staff is the support and guidance of the world. She is the wise one, the healer, the teacher. She commands with the assurance of one who has seen the darkness and has defeated it. She has fought as a Maiden and has lived the greatness of motherhood. She is the prophetess Anne who predicts and warns. She is the Matriarch who steers her family and



upholds tradition. Her failing eyes see the spirit world in a new light. Her memories are the continuity of what has been. She is the Crone whose wisdom holds the world.

The great circle is cast and keeps turning. All around, the face of the Goddess looks on, a woman of many guises and many fates. For everything, there is a season: Maiden-Mother Crone, one and the same and ever changing in the circle of time. They spin into one magnificent figure, one light, one song:

**Holy one, Maiden-Mother-Crone
All honor unto you
You are Goddess
And as this light and song merge into you and fill you with the greatness of the ages, only one
thing is certain: Thou are Goddess.
You are Goddess.**





Egyptian goddess **Isis** is considered representative of ideal femininity, and she is patron of all women, mothers, and children. She is said to have spent time among her people, teaching them the skills of agriculture, and reading.

